

MEDITERRANEAN

SIGGY AND HEATHER | TRIP AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN | SUNDAY, 31 MARCH 2013

Easter Sunday

We woke to another freezing day. It was made even colder by the fact that the house heating was on the blink. George and Mieke were due to arrive to fix the problem. In the meantime we decided that warming exercise was the answer. To keep the wind-chill factor down we decided on a walk rather than a bike ride around the local neighbourhood. It turned into a very enjoyable two hour stroll.

We investigated the local housing and the canal system. Most of the houses are terrace style here with handkerchief size front "yards". A variety of styles, but all brick with mainly steep angled roofs. A minority, like the house we are staying in, are free standing with larger yards. Our house backs onto the canal.

I am currently sitting in bed looking out to the canal. The back of the rear yard is densely covered in bare bushes and trees. Every plant are just waiting for a bit of sun to green up. The local "pond" system is joined by underground drains and crossed by little wooden pedestrian bridges. The canal/ponds, do the job of draining the area. As we all know from school, most of the Netherlands is little more than a metre above sea-level.



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Doesburg

What a lovely afternoon I (Heather) had. Instead of going to the soccer with Sig, Mieke took me to a small village nearby - Doesburg. It was a picture. The houses date from the 1300's. As we got out of the car, it started to snow. Despite our heavy clothing I wondered whether this was going to be a pleasant walk. I could not have been more wrong. It was, in fact, magical.

We walked along the medieval, cobbled streets, looking at the

beautiful buildings and watching the snow drift slowly all around us. It was a privilege to have Mieke explain various points of interest to me.

After following the suggested tourist route around the village, we retired to a restaurant to take in some warming beverage. It claimed to be in the oldest restaurant in the Netherlands and was the location for the trials of numerous "witches". A great day.



COVERED STADIUM Clever design where grassed field can be rolled outside to catch the sun and rain and grow naturally. The inside can then be used for staged events.



BIKES We can imagine how many people come to this swimming and recreation park just by looking at the vast number of bike racks. There were at least a dozen more sets.



MOLES Lots of bumps on the ground are the result of moles burrowing underground. I guess its a good way to keep warm. We wonder how they know where to go.

An Easter Sunday spent relaxing with family - watching football and strolling around in the old town.

A short distance from our house we came across a swimming and general recreation park. There was a sandy beach and lots of green grass on which to relax and catch the sun. It was far too cold for swimming but we could imagine the crowds in the summer. Unfortunately the grass was covered in duck and dog poo. Obviously the animals love it here too!

When I was asked by George if I wanted to go watch a first division football match, I jumped at the opportunity. And what an experience it turned out to be.

Snow was falling as we walked to the stadium. In inclement weather the dome is covered over so when we went inside it was so much warmer (and very, very noisy). There must have been around 15,000 spectators and I swear that George knew every second person.

The prematch razzamatazz with flags waving and music blaring was full on. The team's mascot, an eagle, flew slowly around the stadium - amazing.

"Our" team, Vitesse, was currently third on the ladder and if it won this match against Volle (8th place), would be coming equal second after Ajax and

PSV. I did some homework before the match and even watched some of the earlier match highlights on TV so I knew the names of key players. I was keen to watch out for Wilfred Boney the African centre forward - the main scorer.

THE DUTCH ARE REAL FOOTBALL FANATICS SO I WAS RIGHT AT HOME.

The game started with much fanfare. Every time Bony got anywhere near the ball the stadium exploded. It was interesting to see that the opposition spectator area was very small and had a security fence around it. I was not aware that the Dutch could be so violent :-)

Vitesse were all over the opposition in the first half. Boney scored first and the score at half time was 2-0. The second half was the complete opposite to the first. Vitesse defended the whole time and Volle were unlucky to only score once. George, his son and granddaughter and I, came home happy.

Great football, great atmosphere.

DOESBURG PHOTOS





PHOTOS



STAYING HERE HAS BEEN A GREAT IDEA, NOT ONLY TO EXPERIENCE SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFESTYLE BUT TO ENABLE US TO "SETTLE IN".

WE HAVE HAD A LONG REST AFTER A LONG FLIGHT, ARE MORE CONFIDENT ABOUT DRIVING ON THE ROAD, HAVE PURCHASED AND SET UP A BROADBAND MODEM THAT WORKS IN MOST OF THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND, BEST OF ALL, WE GOT TO KNOW A WONDERFUL COUPLE. MIND YOU, HEATHER THINKS THEY ARE A BIT

STRANGE BECAUSE THEY DON'T OWN A TOASTER (JOKE) SO HEATHER PROMPTLY BOUGHT ONE AND IS NOW CHASING VEGEMITE :-)